



Mold, bacteria, and fungi readily grow on damp surfaces in our homes, especially around bathroom and kitchen fixtures. These microorganisms, which are naturally present in the air and non-potable water, can produce biofilms, or a glue-like coating, to help them stick to surfaces. These biofilms sometimes form a stain (black, red, pink) and can feel slimy.



### How do I recognize a biofilm?

Biofilms can appear as a black, red, or pink stain and are usually found around bathroom and kitchen faucets, drains, toilets or any damp surface. They feel slimy to the touch and can cause your water to have a musty taste or odor when present near your water tap.

### What can I do?

In order for biofilms to occur, the right environmental conditions must be present. Microbes need food and water to grow and multiply.

- The best way to prevent growth is to take away food and water sources.
  - Install ventilation fans in bathrooms and utilize vent hoods when cooking.
  - Use a dehumidifier during times of high humidity.
  - Keep countertops, sinks, drains and water taps clean by using a disinfecting cleaning product. Products such as shampoo, hair spray, soaps, and kitchen food can promote biofilm growth.
  - Empty refrigerator drip pans regularly.
- Certain plumbing materials can also promote the growth of biofilm communities.
  - Exchange rubber washers for a non-rubber material.
  - Remove and clean faucet aerators and shower heads periodically.
- Use of water filters and softeners can lead to biofilm growth.
  - Always use and maintain these according to manufacturer's recommendations.
  - Filters can remove disinfectants, such as chlorine, which help prevent biofilm growth.

### Are biofilms harmful?

Although biofilms can be unpleasant they are generally not hazardous to our health. However, microorganisms have the potential to become pathogenic when the conditions are right. The best defense against contamination is to keep your home clean and dry.

### Maintaining healthy drinking water

- Use only water from the cold tap for drinking, food and baby formula preparation, and brushing teeth. Water from the hot water tap can contain bacteria and metals.
- Flush your cold water taps for several minutes if the water has not been used for several days.
- Keep sink drains and plumbing flowing freely. Only allow water and bathroom tissue to enter your household system.
  - Fats, oils grease from the kitchen and personal or baby wipes in the bathroom can form a blockage that can cause raw sewage to back up into your home. Always place these materials in the garbage and never down the drain.

### For more information

Contact Fulton County Water Resources if you have any concerns or questions about the quality of your drinking water.

Monday - Friday ~ 8:30 am - 5:00 pm  
(404) 612-7400  
[director.dwr@fultoncountyga.gov](mailto:director.dwr@fultoncountyga.gov)

#### 24 Hour Emergency Numbers:

- Drinking Water Issues - North Fulton  
(770) 640-3040
- Sewer Issues - North Fulton  
(404) 612-3061
- Drinking Water Issues - South  
(404) 658-7220 (City of Atlanta)
- Sewer Issues - South Fulton  
(404) 612-3163